

# CHEROHALA SKYWAY

The Cherohala Skyway is a national scenic byway often compared to the Blue Ridge Parkway because of its scenic attractions

and natural topography. The skyway serves as a connector between the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee and the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina, thus the name *Cherohala*. The

route is located in rural western Graham County and is designated as N.C. 143.

American Indians first occupied Graham County before the progression of settlers reached the territory in the early 1830s. Early homesteaders followed American Indian paths and game trails into this land.

**The route is accessible by driving on N.C. 143 West from Robbinsville for 12 miles. A scenic overlook and sign mark the beginning of the scenic byway.** An information kiosk at this scenic overlook offers motorists an opportunity to enjoy the tranquil view while learning about the development of the skyway and its recreational opportunities.

Also at this overlook, visitors can view the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, which was dedicated on July 30, 1936, to the late author of the poem "Trees." This pristine

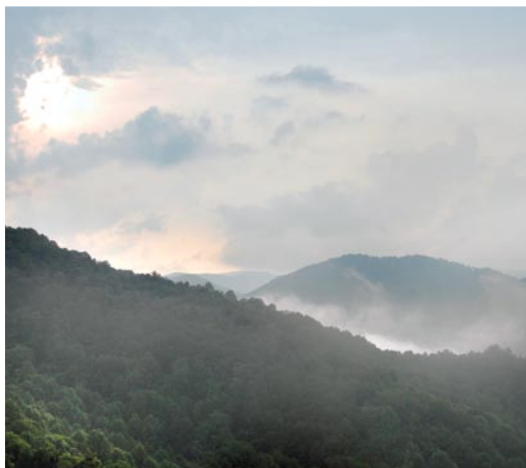
forest, one of the finest stands of its type in America, includes poplar, hemlock and oak. Some tulip-poplars have grown in

excess of 100 feet high and 20 feet in circumference. More than 100 species of trees can be seen here while hiking on more than 60 miles of trails. Contact the U.S. Forest Service or the Cheoah Ranger Station for further

information on the forest, the adjoining Slickrock Wilderness Area and nearby Lake Santeetlah.

**The byway begins at Santeetlah Gap and ascends along Cedar Top Mountain.** This peak joins with Little Huckleberry Knob, Hooper's Bald, Laurel Top and John's Knob to form the backbone of the byway. **The route weaves westward through these southern Appalachian Mountains.** They are considered to be some of the oldest in the world, formed more than 200 million years ago. Many overlooks, trail access points and pull-offs are along the drive. Motorists should be alert for both pedestrians and bicyclists along the route.

Hardwood and coniferous trees abound throughout these mountains thanks to the U.S. Forest Service. Following the Civil



NCDOT

Cherohala